

How I see you, veil or not

WHEN I WAS A CHILD my family used to visit my mother's relatives who lived in Rasht, in northern Iran. Although we were Christians, they were devout Muslims. They all wore *chador*, or the veil. It looked so attractive to my sisters and me, we wanted to wear it also. So they used to lend us some *chadors*, which we would wear when we went out. There was such love and affection between us, and we totally respected each other's religious beliefs.

Years later, living in London, I caught myself looking with a different attitude when I saw women wearing veils. Whereas in Iran as children we had found it natural to accept what people wore, in the West, to me, the veil seemed more like a statement of individuals' beliefs and identity. So I asked myself, Does a veil define a woman, or is there another way to see oneself?

The Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians:

"Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with unveiled face reflecting as a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord the Spirit" (I Cor. 3:17, 18, Revised Version). The "unveiled face" describes a spiritual concept. It takes the issue out of the domain of what we wear to how we can see ourselves and one another as the perfectly loved children of God.

As Christian Science explains, the veil that needs to be taken away is the material sense of our being, which hides from us the spiritual sense of God and of ourselves as God's reflection. What matters isn't what people wear, but how we see one another. When we recognize ourselves as spiritual, we are removing the "veil" that limits our view of life and identity. We are removing whatever hides anyone's true nature as God's loved, perfect creation.

— Marta Greenwood